ERIC Document Resume | See Instruction Sheet | DATE OF RESUME 6/31/65 | DATE RECEIVED

A. PUBLICATION DATA

1. ERIC NUMBER: ED000086
2. ORIGINATOR CONTROL NO(S).: 7424
3. IDENTIFICATION NO.: N.A.

DO NOT WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

4. AUTHOR(S): Ling, Dwight L. and McIntyre, William R.

MICROFILM COPY AVAILABLE: YES X NO ☐

5. TITLE OF DOCUMENT ABSTRACTED: The Able Student Program at DePauw University

COPYRIGHT GRANTED: YES ☐ NO X

COPYRIGHT RELEASE FILED: YES ☐ NO ☐

6. PUBLICATION TITLE: N.A.

TYPE OF REPORT: PROPOSAL ☐ IN-PROGRESS ☐ FINAL X FOLLOW-UP ☐

7. EDITOR(S): N.A.

8. PLACE OF ORIGIN: ORG. DePauw University; CITY, STATE: Greencastle, Ind.

9. PUBLISHER OR SOURCE: DePauw University

OTHER ERIC REFERENCES:

10. VOL.	11. PAGES	12. MO./YR.	13. TOTAL PP.	TELE.	EXT.	INST/LOC CODE	ERIC SATELLITE CODE
N.A.	N.A.	60	15				

B. INDEXING DATA

14. SUBJECT AREA

15. TYPE OF ENDEAVOR: report

16. INDEXING TERMS (6-12)

progress report	honors programs	teaching methods	
students	advanced placement	core curriculum	
talent	independent study	programs	

17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

A progress report, summarizing results of a 2-year program for able students at DePauw, indicates that an able student at DePauw has opportunities within five categories: Advanced placement with or without credit, independent study, honors, interdepartmental seminars, and departmental programs for the senior year.

ERIC No.

18. SOURCE OF ABSTRACT

C. FUNDING DATA

19. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION

20. DIVISION OR DEPT.

21. CONTRACT NO. / PROJECT NO.

22. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT

23. DURATION OR PROJECT

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Office of Education

ERIC Form 1

5-14 #7424
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THE ABLE STUDENT PROGRAM

AT

DEPAUW UNIVERSITY

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education

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GREENCASTLE, INDIANA

ED000086

THE ABLE STUDENT PROGRAM
AT
DEPAUW UNIVERSITY

by

Dwight L. Ling

William R. McIntyre

Based on a study made possible
by a grant from
LILLY ENDOWMENT, INCORPORATED

FOREWORD

DePauw University has been fortunate during most of its rich history in having an able faculty, a well-selected student body, and a strong liberal arts program.

The search for excellence has been an important part of the history of DePauw. In recent years we have been bringing back into focus again the importance of liberal arts at DePauw and the strengthening of this important program.

The grant that was given by Lilly Endowment, Incorporated, for the project outlined in this booklet has assisted us greatly in our search for excellence. I sincerely hope that our work on this campus will prove to be of assistance to other schools across the country.

RUSSELL J. HUMBERT
President

INTRODUCTION

The announcement of the series of grants by Lilly Endowment to encourage curricular improvement for superior students came at a most opportune time for DePauw University. Several months before this announcement in 1956, there was a growing interest on the campus in considering programs which might strengthen academic standards with special emphasis on opportunities for the able student. The initial interest was in the revitalization of the honors program, and the Educational Policy Committee had appointed a sub-committee in this area. The sub-committee was at work when the opportunity provided by Lilly Endowment was announced in 1956.

After a thorough consideration by the faculty, it was decided to present a proposal with primary emphasis on honors work but with provisions for exploration of the areas of independent study, interdepartmental seminars, and advanced placement as well. The proposal was approved by Lilly Endowment, and a grant of $20,000 was made to DePauw for this purpose.

The administration of the program was organized with the Dean of the University as general chairman, Dr. Fredrick L. Bergmann, Director of English Honors, Dr. Andrew W. Crandall, Director of History Honors, Dr. Coen G. Pierson, Chairman of the sub-committee on honors, and Dr. William R. McIntyre, Director of the studies on interdepartmental seminars, independent study, and advanced placement.

This summer of 1960 marks the end of the two-year project, and this booklet is an attempt to summarize the results of the program. The Chairman of the Educational Policy Committee for the current year, Dr. Dwight L. Ling, has collected the data and other results of the program and has written the following summary report. He has been assisted by Dr. William R. McIntyre, who supervised the areas of the grant indicated in the preceding paragraph.

Several observations must be made. The substantial progress in this area has been helped significantly by the Lilly Endowment grant. This action came at an appropriate time and provided the means to carry out the program which was in the planning stage. The gains made are the result of the work of many faculty members in their search for

new means of encouraging and stimulating able students. The program was also given additional support by the Danforth Foundation and the Campus Community Workshop in 1959. Four faculty members attended the workshop, which gave further direction to the able student program. Numerous other workshops, such as the advanced placement conferences, have also helped us in our study, as has the growing conviction throughout the nation in the need for higher standards in academic work.

This is simply a report of progress. It is written to provide a review of steps taken and gains made; it is also intended to point out areas where much more needs to be done. The goal is to develop a program which will stimulate students in their academic and intellectual development in an atmosphere of learning. The report indicates that some important steps have been taken in this direction. We appreciate the constant encouragement of President Russell J. Humbert, the active participation of the DePauw faculty, the support of Lilly Endowment, Incorporated, and the Danforth Foundation in making this progress possible.

ROBERT H. FARBER

Dean of the University

THE ABLE STUDENT PROGRAM AT DEPAUW UNIVERSITY

Essentially higher education is faced with the difficult task of educating more students without bringing about a deterioration in the quality of education. To do this without the possibility of a corresponding increase in the number of well-qualified teachers presents a problem. The most destructive possibility is that large classes and routine educational procedures, designed to handle greater numbers, will bore the able students, dissipating their efforts in a system encouraging mediocrity. The danger of subordinating the individual to the impersonal institution was pointed out in the "Rockefeller Report" on education:

> The risk is that we will glorify science and forget the scientists; magnify government and ignore the men and women who discharge its functions; pin our hopes on education, business or cultural institutions, and lose sight of the fact that these institutions are no more creative or purposeful than the individuals who endow them with creativity and purpose.

If we acknowledge this situation it is imperative that each institution review its curriculum to see if it is adequately meeting the able student's needs.

Although in the past, DePauw has offered some departmental courses for these students, such programs were limited in nature. In response to a 1956 announcement by Lilly Endowment, Incorporated, DePauw submitted a plan for curricular and instructional improvement for superior students. The receipt of a grant enabled DePauw to introduce an English honors program, expand history honors, formulate plans for interdepartmental seminars, establish an advanced placement program, and introduce a program of independent study.

An evaluation of the situation after the expiration of this two-year grant has revealed, upon the part of the faculty and administration, a greater awareness and understanding of the need for an able student program at DePauw. The Committee that attended the Danforth Conference on higher education in 1959 stated that "DePauw does not have a coordinated plan for the able student from the high school through the college senior level." While it is a tendency for each department to be engrossed in its own program without taking into account the need for a University plan, the Danforth Committee optimistically pointed out "that a thrust toward excellence in education has already been gradually, perhaps inevitably, re-shaping the University's curriculum."

The object of this report is to summarize what is being done for the able student and to point out some areas where the present plan

could be extended. A review of this program indicates that an able student has opportunities within five categories:

1. Advanced placement with or without credit.
2. Independent study.
3. Honors.
4. Interdepartmental seminars.
5. Departmental programs for the senior year.

Advanced Placement

In May 1959, the faculty voted to give advanced placement and credit to high school graduates who passed the College Board Advanced Placement Examinations with grades equivalent to B or better. With the approval of the department concerned and the Dean, students may earn up to twelve credit hours which may be counted toward the total graduation hours, toward the major and minor, and toward particular area requirements.

Considerable interest in advanced placement resulted from the National Conference on Advanced Placement in History held at DePauw in June 1958. In his report, Dr. Coen G. Pierson of DePauw University, Chairman of the conference, pointed out that sixty per cent of the colleges in the program are giving credit as well as advanced placement in history. DePauw is fortunate to be in that group. With the help of the Lilly Grant, the University has been represented at the advanced placement conferences in history for the last four years. We have also sent two representatives to advanced placement conferences in English, and members of the chemistry and mathematics departments have attended meetings in their disciplines.

In the last three years, ten students have received advanced placement and five of this number were given placement with credit. The number who use this privilege appears to be increasing each year, and as the high schools offer more college-level work, more able students will take advantage of this opportunity.

In addition to the new program in advanced placement, DePauw has been giving advanced placement without credit in foreign languages with the exception of Russian and Greek. For example, upon a sufficiently high score on placement tests, able students are excused from the introductory level courses in these departments.

The English Department uses test scores to section its course in English Composition; therefore the able student, while not excused from the introductory course, does receive special attention. Sectioning is done on the basis of low, medium, and high examination scores. The Romance Language Department has established advanced second-year French and Spanish sections for superior students. Students are also sectioned according to their writing ability in the Basic Communications course.

The area of advanced placement offers one of the greatest opportunities for expanding our program for the able student. A number of colleges are using an early admissions policy to enable gifted high school students to begin college work on the basis of ability and achievement rather than solely on the fact of high school graduation. Furthermore, proficiency examinations, perhaps the College Board Examination, might be used for advanced placement in certain areas, particularly for students whose high schools do not offer such courses. Advanced placement offers a partial solution to the pressure of increased enrollment since it would remove students from crowded freshman courses and place them in advanced courses where they can be assimilated without additional staff. Plans are now being developed to send faculty members to the leading high schools in our area to interview students interested in advanced placement.

Independent Study

Some of the Lilly Grant was used for an investigation of independent study programs in other universities. Vistits were made to Grinnell, Princeton, and Swarthmore. Awakened interest in such a program was brought to the attention of the "New Ideas" subcommittee of the Educational Policy Committee. During the academic year 1958-1959, the subcommittee gave priority to independent study. By spring, the Educational Policy Committee's plan for independent study in the freshman and sophomore years was passed by the faculty. This plan allows the student to study more thoroughly some aspects of his regular course work. Qualified students may earn one credit hour for independent study during the second semester of their freshman year and during both semesters of their sophomore year.

Since the beginning of the program thirty freshman and sophomore students have participated, and five of them have earned independent study credit in more than one course. The areas in which this study was offered were History, Russian, English Literature, Political Science,

Geology, Mathematics, and Chemistry. Although only one third of the departments offered this opportunity during the first academic year it was available, it is hoped that there will be a greater use of the program in the future. The plan helps discover and encourage able students early in their college careers and gives them experience in individual study which should be helpful in their junior and senior years.

Junior and Senior Honors

Independent study and honors form the center around which an able student program is developed. The general objectives that could be used to evaluate these programs are the following:

1. To release the able student from any restraints (real or imaginary), which might arise from a routine type of class schedule or learning situation.
2. To teach students self-reliance and enable them to better schedule their work.
3. To encourage a critical and investigative attitude in students, allowing them to pursue a topic or area to their satisfaction.
4. To enable students to benefit from a critical analysis by their peers through group discussions.
5. To help students become more articulate in presenting material orally and to increase proficiency in written work.
6. To remove the emphasis from grade and credit to a desire to learn and enjoy a more mature approach to higher education.

The honors program at DePauw has an illustrious history. From 1879 to 1890 about 175 students were graduated with honors by completing work beyond the normal requirements. After a lapse of forty years, honors was revived in 1931 in the social sciences. An informative and complete analysis of honors work from 1931 to 1955 can be found in chapter five of the *Report of the Self Study Committee 1955*. This section was written by Dr. George Manhart.

There are general University rules within which the departmental honors operate. These regulations specify the minimum grade average for admission and the average neccessary for graduation with honors. In addition, it is established that an honors thesis shall be written and an oral examination taken on the thesis area. Furthermore, the candidate must take preliminary examinations at the end of the junior year and a final comprehensive at the end of the senior year.

In 1957, expansion of the honors program was made possible by a

grant from Lilly Endowment, Incorporated, under the heading: "Curricular Improvement for Superior Students." The grant provided for a "pilot program" in English and History honors and put into operation a plan for the introduction of English honors and the expansion of honors in History. Through this grant an additional instructor was appointed in each of these departments, thereby allowing some instructors to spend more time in the honors program.

The new program in English was designed to develop an integrated knowledge of English and American Literature, knowledge of literary criticism, understanding of literary research, and the ability to write effectively. Normally the program is limited to six students per year, making a total of twelve students in junior and senior honors. A student admitted to the program is relieved of all regular English course work and class attendance during the junior and senior years. The student's work is conducted in three areas: 1. Independent study and writing with tutorial guidance, 2. Seminar, and 3. Honors thesis. The Lilly grant made it possible to relieve three tutors and one seminar leader of a fourth of their regular course load. Near the end of the two-year grant period, the head of the department, Dr. Fredrick L. Bergmann, reported: "The Department of English is highly enthusiastic about the honors program and does not feel that the expenditure of teaching time on it is to be considered in any way disadvantageous."

The History Department also used part of the Lilly Grant for the appointment of an instructor in order to reduce the teaching load of the four faculty members working in honors. The department rotates the responsibility for honors so that all members of the staff teach honors fields. After receipt of this grant, twelve to fourteen juniors and seniors were included in the program annually as compared to the previous maximum of three or four. The candidate prepares himself for comprehensive examinations in five fields of history, at least one of which must be from European and one from American History. Work in these fields may be done in several ways: individual reading, tutorial work, seminars, and auditing. Normally the student is not enrolled in any regular history courses.

At the end of the two-year period, each history faculty member and all honors students wrote a critique of the program. Out of this evaluation some new techniques were developed in the honors seminars. Nobody wanted the program to be discontinued. The general attitude can best be summarized in a succinct statement by one of the students: "The seminar sessions and the extensive use of the library encouraged

by the Honors Program have been a valuable educational experience for me."

As an additional evaluation of the English and history honors programs, the DePauw Bureau of Testing and Research has used the Advanced Test of the Graduate Record Examination. This was given to senior honors students in 1959 and again in 1960. For each group of honors students a control sample was selected, matched according to major, class, sex, ACE-Linguistic score, and seven-semester gradepoint average. From the testing at the end of the first year the Bureau concluded: "For both English and History, the honors groups achieved better on their respective Advanced GRE Test than did the members of a matched control group. The small size of the samples makes it impossible to say more than that the trend favors the honors students." Upon collecting the data for both years it was still impossible to reach definite conclusions; however, the trend still favored the honors students. In the achievement test in English Literature, the median score for the honors sample was at the 77th centile on national norms and the median score for the control group was at the 44th centile. For history, the median score for the honors sample was at the 81st centile on national norms, and the control sample was at the 76th centile.

Although the English and History Departments expanded the number of honors students as a result of the "pilot program" from 1957-1959 provided by the Lilly Grant, six other departments offer opportunity for honors work. These departments are Classical Languages and Literature, Philosophy and Religion, Political Science, Romance Languages, Sociology, and Speech. The Political Science and Sociology Departments had honors under the revived program in 1931, but both programs were discontinued because of lack of demand. Currently, Sociology has no honors students but plans to revive the program when the need arises. The Political Science Department revived honors last year and will have four or five students in junior and senior honors in the academic year 1960-1961.

While general University requirements govern the mechanics of departmental honors, there is ample room for diverse methods of teaching in the honors program. The plan developed by the Philosophy and Religion Department provides that candidates complete two semesters of honors in conjunction with a course within the teaching curriculum of the department. The third and last semester of honors consists of a Senior Honors Seminar. Each candidate develops a thesis that he began during the Major's Seminar, which is a course that helps the stu-

dent to integrate his major field and prepares him for comprehensive examinations.

In classical languages the student is engaged for a large part of his time in reading in the original language and becomes acquainted with the major Greek and Latin writers.

The Speech program is more closely connected with regular departmental course offerings. In the junior year the candidate takes four hours of a course entitled "Junior Readings for Honors." The senior year consists of six hours of honors in the following areas: three hours in a speech project, two hours in a reading program, and one hour culminating in a performance final examination.

The latest area to include honors is the program in either French or Spanish literature within the Romance Language Department. Each candidate must prepare himself for comprehensive examinations in four of six areas in either French or Spanish literature.

The general feeling among those who teach in the honors program is that this vital service to the able student is well worth the added time and expense.

Interdepartmental Seminars

For a number of years members of the DePauw faculty have been aware that concentration within a major and the distribution achieved by prescribed graduation requirements were not, in many instances, affording students, particularly the more able ones, an adequate means of integrating their educational experiences. The General Education Program (which was later to include the Senior Colloquium) was adopted in 1948 by the faculty as an experimental curriculum. The object was to offset a tendency toward too early specialization and to enlarge and broaden intellectual horizons into areas of knowledge that otherwise might not have been touched. Also in 1948, the Area Major Program was instituted by the faculty "in order to make available to students a broad major field including courses from several related fields; consequently the area major courses cut across discipline lines."

As a part of the effort to strengthen the academic program for the superior student, the Lilly Endowment Grants to DePauw in 1957 included funds to investigate interdepartmental seminars. The initial proposal stated the significance of such seminars.

1. The experiments would be all-university in implication. . . .
2. Such seminars would, without duplication of existing courses, increase the opportunities to challenge intellectually a number of superior and advanced students.
3. Exchange among participating faculty should lead to intellectual growth, to understanding and appreciation of the contribution of associated disciplines.
4. Seminars of this nature could furnish stimulation for joint interdisciplinary projects and research.
5. . . . these seminars would complement this program by furnishing an opportunity, at an advanced level, to breach discipline barriers. Integration by faculty at a high level should serve to broaden the perspective of students and avoid the tendency toward departmental bias that consideration of the same topic might encounter when presented within a single discipline.

During the academic years 1958-59 and 1959-60, members of DePauw's teaching staff visited five schools (Harvard University, Northwestern University, Reed College, University of Chicago, and University of Michigan) to secure new ideas and suggestions for initiating interdepartmental courses at DePauw. The interdepartmental programs in these schools may be divided into three general areas.

Divisional Plan (University of Chicago)—Committees organize a cross-departmental series of courses, generally within a division, which will constitute a degree program. The Committee on International Relations and The Committee on Human Development represent two such programs now maintained on a permanent basis.

Departmental Plan (Harvard University)—Of particular interest was the Department of Social Relations (an administrative integration of Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology), in which, in addition to an interdepartmental major, a number of cross discipline courses are offered.

Course Plan—Interdepartmental courses are offered at each of the five schools visited. Such integrated courses are taught either by a single instructor or by two or more. The five-year experiment in interdepartmental courses at Union College conductd under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation demonstrated the value of such courses for a liberal arts college.

DePauw, perhaps in part because of its size, has not considered organizing on a divisional or a departmental basis for interdepartmental majors. Thus far the Area Major Program has been functioning ef-

fectively for this purpose. It is, however, in the area of interdepartmental courses that these visitations to other campuses have sparked a genuine interest on the DePauw campus. In 1958-59 a seminar on "The Negro in Africa and America," combining the disciplines of Anthropology and Sociology, was offered by two faculty members who had investigated interdepartmental courses on other campuses. In 1959-60 three cross discipline courses were given:

Mathematics 450	Interdepartmental Seminar (involving the disciplines of mathematics, physics, and chemistry)
English 367B Philosophy and Religion 367B	Interdepartmental Seminar: Literature and Ideas
Philosophy and Religion 367C Sociology 367C	Interdepartmental Seminar: Power Structures in Society

For a number of years majors in Bacteriology and in Botany have been required to participate in a combined Senior Seminar.

Also under consideration and at varying degrees of planning are a number of other prospective interdepartmental courses. Among these are a seminar on Labor Relations (Economics, Psychology, and Sociology); and a year course in Problems of Urban Areas (Geography, Political Science, and Sociology); and a year course in Africa South of the Sahara (Economics, Geography, History, Political Science, and Sociology-Anthropology). The expectation is that this latter course will be offered in the academic year 1961-62. As these courses demonstrate their challenge to the more able student to bridge the various fields of knowledge with greater insight and as faculty members themselves are alerted to the stimulation of ideas and information from their colleagues, it is to be anticipated that more courses of this nature will be offered at DePauw.

Although DePauw has entered the field of interdepartmental courses only recently, student response has been enthusiastic. This response appears to confirm the expectations that such courses challenge the more intellectually able and advanced students and contribute to the understanding and appreciation of associated disciplines.

Departmental Programs for Seniors

Although senior-year programs should not be designed specifically for able students, indirectly they do affect an able student program. One

of the basic principles of seminar and senior project work is the inclusion of independent study which allows the good students to produce something of real merit.

A recent review of the senior year at DePauw indicates a varied program representing the following objectives:

1. An opportunity for every student to do significant independent study.
2. Opportunity for seniors to go deeply into an area which is of special interest to them.
3. Practice in oral and written presentation.
4. Discussion of their topic or report with other students and members of the department staff.
5. Familiarity with recent research in their area of specialty.
6. Learning research methods and skills as preparation for graduate work.
7. Integration of the various fields found within their major area.
8. Preparation for a comprehensive examination in their major area.
9. Senior display in fine arts or a senior music recital.

Approximately half of the departments have a required senior course or seminar, some of the remaining number strongly recommend such courses, and six departments do not offer these courses.

The nature of these senior courses varies greatly, as the nine objectives listed above would indicate. Some departments use a senior course to integrate all aspects of the major field. For example, one science department has an interdisciplinary course with a related science so that its majors will need to work in a broader area. In this course, new developments in both sciences are studied and discussed. Other departments have established seminars and research projects that appear to be pre-professional or an introduction to graduate school. Obviously there is little agreement on the role of these courses in respect to a general liberal arts education. Two points of view are evident from this study: first, that liberal arts goals are achieved through a penetrating course such as the senior seminar; and second, that we need greater emphasis on interdisciplinary and liberal education courses. The only senior course that attempts to cover many diverse aspects of liberal arts is the Senior Colloquium in the General Studies Program. The two points of view can hardly be represented as an "either-or" proposition because both approaches have some merit. The proper balance of these ideals presents a problem for the faculty to consider more fully.

Since the senior programs tend to be strongly departmental, they do offer the able student a challenge to become more competent and conversant in his major area. If there is one general principle underlying these programs, it is to develop strong majors in the various departments. The fact that about sixty per cent of our male graduates go into some type of graduate work may largely dictate the nature of our senior year. This could present a problem if the needs of those who do not do graduate work cease to be met by the programs.

Summary

DePauw has now developed a program for the able student beginning with advanced placement and ending with the senior year. This program has been somewhat obscure and needs to be publicized more widely. Parts of the program are incomplete and operate only for a small percentage of the able students. In order for this program to be meaningful throughout the University, independent study, honors, interdepartmental seminars, and senior seminars need to be expanded and coordinated with a plan to strengthen the liberal arts at DePauw. One of the objectives of liberal arts is a situation allowing the greatest possible fulfillment of an individual's potential. To accomplish this objective, able students need to accept a greater responsibility for their college career and have more freedom and flexibility in developing a program to meet their own needs. Often truly able students are modest and require encouragement. Better communication among the faculty is desirable so that an able student is discovered and challenged in all courses rather than in only a few. With the prospect of a more selective admissions policy along with better high school education, DePauw will be increasingly faced with the challenge of the able student. The beginning of such a program is evident from this study, but further coordination and expansion will be necessary if we hope to meet the demands that the future will present.